

Town of Tiverton



Economic Development Commission

343 Highland Road, Tiverton Rhode Island 02878

MEETING MINUTES

ORGANIZATION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

DATE AND TIME: JUNE 12, 2008 @ 6:00 PM

LOCATION: TIVERTON COMMUNITY CENTER
346 JUDSON STREET
TIVERTON, RI 02878

Item # 1 Call to order

Chairman Len Schmidt called the regular meeting of the Tiverton Economic Development Commission to order at 6:00 P.M. Members present were: Len Schmidt, Steve Gilbert and Annelisa Steinkrauss. Also present was Town Planner Chris Spencer and resident and business owner Scott Humphrey.

Item # 2 Approval of Minutes

Ms. Steinkrauss made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Steinkrauss, Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Schmidt voted in favor.

Item # 3 Review / update of action items from the May 8, 2008 meeting

Ms. Steinkrauss stated that she had spoken with Jan Brodie of Armory Revival Company, developers of the Bourne Mill. Ms. Brodie had indicated a desire to work with the town and the commission. Mr. Schmidt stated that this item would also appear later on the agenda. Mr. Spencer noted that he had filed a CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) request for funds to study the area surrounding the Bourne Mill, specifically with regards to pedestrian linkages to the commercial areas. Mr. Spencer stated that he would also like to pursue "Safe Routes to School) funds, which could be used to improve pedestrian access.

Mr. Gilbert noted that the town does not employ a full-time grant writer. He asked if there were other groups in town who would like to write grant applications. Mr. Spencer stated the time that he could dedicate to grant writing was limited, but that a lack of matching funds was also a problem. Mr. Gilbert asked if the Newport Chamber of Commerce could provide matching grant

funds. Mr. Spencer replied that this could be an untapped resource, particularly when applying for funds to perform studies.

Mr. Gilbert stated that an objective going forward should be to work more closely with the Chamber. Mr. Spencer stated that a Chamber meeting was held at the Boathouse this past Monday (June 9). He was present, as well as all Town Council members. Mr. Gilbert expressed disappointment that the EDC was not invited.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Design Standards project, and the work relating to North Tiverton. Mr. Spencer noted that he was in the process of determining what work had been completed, and what was outstanding. North Tiverton infrastructure and roads was discussed. Mr. Spencer noted that Main Road, from Route 24 to the State line, was scheduled for repaving by RIDOT (Department of Transportation).

Item # 4 Discussion and follow-up – Economic Development initiatives

4.1 Bourne Mill Development

Ms. Steinkrauss stated that Ms. Brodie had indicated that she would like to hear ideas from the EDC regarding their commercial component. Mr. Schmidt stated that the Bourne Mill and North Tiverton should not be considered exclusive of each other. Ms. Steinkrauss stated that she had approached two business owners regarding the formation of a North Tiverton Business Association, and had received a negative reaction. She stated that the business owners were skeptical that action would be taken. Ms. Steinkrauss opined that the Bourne Mill would be an opportunity to demonstrate some action.

Ms. Steinkrauss suggested that a survey or a forum or reception should be held. She noted that Alex Billiouris, owner of the CVS / Dunkin Donuts plaza, had indicated that he would participate in an association. She suggested that a reception could be held, and interest in joining an association could be gauged. A survey could also allow the participants to express their interests and priorities.

Mr. Spencer suggested combining this effort with the Design Standards project. He suggested that an evening meeting could be held at the Community Center. The naming of an association was discussed. It was suggested that residents might also wish to participate. Mr. Spencer stated that he would like to discuss the Design Standards project at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the establishment of communications between large groups of people. Mr. Gilbert volunteered to look into establishing a process, such as a website or blog. The members indicated a wish to engage residents and release information, such as minutes, as quickly as possible.

There was a discussion regarding grocery stores. Ms. Steinkrauss noted that there was a new specialty foods store in North Tiverton (Healthy Haven). She noted that it had poor signage, which may hinder its success. She suggested that the EDC could work with the owner to improve signage. Mr. Gilbert opined that the available infrastructure discourages entrepreneurs, such as those who would develop a new grocery store. Mr. Gilbert suggested that the EDC should establish a relationship with the SBA (Small Business Administration). He also suggested a

partnership with a university entrepreneurship program, such as Roger Williams or URI. Ms. Steinkrauss agreed to contact URI. Mr. Gilbert noted that Tiverton would be a prime location for a graduate or “off-site” school. Discussion ensued.

4.2 North Tiverton

Discussion of this item was combined with 4.1.

4.3 Stone Bridge Business Development

Mr. Spencer stated that he did not have anything to discuss and probably would not by the next meeting. He suggested continuing the discussion to a future meeting. Mr. Spencer noted that there was formerly two (2) unrecognized Stone Bridge committees, which had been reorganized into one (1) Town recognized commission by the Town Council. Mr. Spencer had been named as Chair. He stated that the EDC Chair, or his designee, was also appointed as a member. The scheduling of future Stone Bridge meetings would be determined to allow an EDC member to attend. Mr. Schmidt stated that he would be happy to attend, but would allow someone else to attend if they would like.

4.4 Four Corners Association

It was noted that this item would remain on the agenda, since the EDC had committed to help the existing association. Mr. Spencer stated that he would review his notes and identify three or four low-cost points to pursue, such as signage off of the highway.

Item # 5 Review of plan for Main Road – North Tiverton

This item was already discussed (see 4.1). Mr. Spencer stated that he would give a status report at the next meeting.

Item # 6 Enterprise Zone Benefits and opportunities

Mr. Spencer distributed some information he had printed off of the state EDC (Economic Development Corporation) website.

Item # 7 New Business

Mr. Spencer asked if the new meeting time (6PM) was acceptable. He stated that he would let the Town Clerk know of the change. The location of meetings was discussed. Mr. Spencer noted that the air-conditioned Community Center room should be available in the future.

Mr. Gilbert made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Steinkrauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

(Italicized words represent corrections made on the approved date.)

Submitted by: _____
Kate Michaud

Approval Date: August 14, 2008